



Washington Asset Building Coalition

Building Assets, Strengthening Communities

June 4-5, 2008

**Yakima Convention Center
Yakima, Washington**



WASHINGTON ASSET BUILDING COALITION

Dear *Building Assets, Strengthening Communities* Conference Participants,

On behalf of the Washington Asset Building Coalition (WABC), we heartily welcome you to our first full-fledged conference where we will learn together about the many facets of asset building and how to be more successful in fostering it to strengthen our communities.

Asset building is an approach to fostering financial independence. It provides individuals with tangible incentives to save and use positive financial behaviors—helping them gain financial success. Elements include savings and banking campaigns, home ownership, individual development accounts, micro enterprise, financial education and counseling, and affordable financial services and products. In these times of negative savings rates, mortgage foreclosures and increased debt, we all have our work cut out for us.

Over the past few years, from Seattle to Spokane, from Moses Lake to Longview and from the Okanogan to Port Angeles and across the state of Oregon, dedicated leaders from the private, public and non-profit sectors have joined together to expand asset building in their communities. In Washington State, there are now active local asset building coalitions in at least 14 areas of the state.

Leaders and staff from banks and credit unions, financial regulatory agencies, community action and housing agencies, micro-enterprise and business development groups, low-income advocates, education and workforce organizations, United Way agencies, faith-based and other non-profit and government service providers are all among those taking action to strengthen the financial skills and security of low and moderate income families in their communities. Whether you are new or a veteran to this important work, we welcome you!

This conference could not have been as affordable and successful without the support of our generous sponsors noted on the back cover—please join us in thanking them!

This is your conference – please make it work for you and your community! We look forward to your participation.

Sincerely,

Paul Knox
Department of Community,
Trade and Economic Development

Paula Mahoney
WABC, Co-Chair
WaMu

Larry Stuckart
WABC, Co-Chair
Spokane Neighbor
Action Program



June 4

10:00 am Welcome and Opening Remarks **Ballroom C**

Keynote Address: **Expanding Economic Opportunities through Asset Building**

Andrea Levere, *President, CFED*

11:00 am Panel Discussion: **Diverse Voices of Asset Building: Current Status and Future Direction**

11:35 am Participant Perspectives: Table Conversations

12:20 pm Lunch: **Expanding Access to Mainstream Financial Services**

Mary A. Laraia, *Project Director, Initiative on Financial Security, The Aspen Institute*

	Basic	Policy	Training	Special Topics	Leadership	Roundtable
1:45 pm	Asset Building 101 Suite 200	Asset Policy and Advocacy Suite 400	EITC Campaigns Suite 600	Homeownership Preservation Suite 100	Financial Services for Low Income Suite 500	Roundtable Microenterprise Suite 300
3:00 pm	Break					
3:15 pm	Asset Building Web Tools Suite 200	Asset Building Scorecard Suite 400	IDAs Training Suite 600	Promoting Assets in Public Programs Suite 100	Measuring Outcomes Suite 500	Roundtable Strengthening Local ABCs Suite 300
4:50 pm	Goal Team Huddles					Ballroom C
5:30 pm	Reception					Lobby West

June 5

8:15 am Welcome and Opening Remarks **Ballroom C**

	Basic	Policy	Training	Special Topics	Leadership	Roundtable
8:30 am	Expanding Homeownership Suite 200	Micro Enterprise as an Asset Building Tool Suite 400	Promoting Savings, Banking and Sound Financial Behaviors Suite 600	Asset Building for People with Disabilities Suite 100	Asset Building around the Country Suite 500	Roundtable Tribal Asset Building Coalitions Suite 300
9:45 am	Break					
10:00 am	Effective Asset Preservation Practices Suite 200	Funding your Asset Building Suite 400	Financial Education for Youth Suite 600	Asset Building in Tribal Communities Suite 100	Cross Cultural Attitudes and Values Suite 500	Roundtable IDAs in WA and OR Suite 300
11:15 am	Regional and Tribal Asset Building Coalition Meetings					
12:00 pm	Lunch					Ballroom C
1:00 pm	Getting By, Getting Ahead, Staying Ahead Legislative Panel Town Hall Meeting Grant Drawing					
4:00pm	Adjourn					



Day One – Wednesday, June 4, 2008

8:00 a.m. **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

9:00 a.m. **Local-Regional Gatherings** **Ballroom C**
Opportunity to check in about the conference and discuss workshop participation with your partners from your local community

10:00 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Remarks** **Ballroom C**
Paul Knox, *Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development*
Kim Justice, *Statewide Poverty Action Network*
Paula Mahoney, *WaMu, WABC Co-Chair*
Rep. Jeannie Darneille, *Washington State House of Representatives, Tacoma*

10:20 a.m. **Keynote Address**
Expanding Economic Opportunities through Asset Building
Andrea Levere, *President, CFED*

11:00 a.m. **Panel Discussion**
Diverse Voices of Asset Building: Current Status and Future Direction
Responses from private and public leaders

11:35 a.m. **Participant Perspectives: Table Conversations**

12:20 p.m. **Lunch**
Expanding Access to Mainstream Financial Services
Mary A. Laraia, *Project Director, Initiative on Financial Security, The Aspen Institute*

1:45 p.m. **Breakout Sessions: Creating an Asset Building Strategy for Your Community**

Asset Building 101: Spearheading Asset Building in Your Community **Suite 200**
Explore the critical elements of an effective asset building initiative, including identifying key stakeholders, setting realistic goals, and measuring success.

Moderator: **Paul Knox**, *CTED*
Jerry DeGrieck, *Seattle-King County ABC*
Tracy Fletcher, *Northwest Community Action Center*
Barb Gorzinski, *Pierce County Associated Ministries*
Stephanie Blumhagen, *United Way of Spokane County*

Asset Policy and Advocacy **Suite 400**
Learn about Washington State's current asset policy and participate in a conversation on how it can be improved. Find out how you can advocate for changes in public policy that would help individuals and families build wealth.

Moderator: **Kim Justice**, *Statewide Poverty Action Network*
Jeff Chapman, *Washington Center on Budget & Policy*
Dennis Smith, *United Way of Snohomish County*



Day One – Wednesday, June 4, 2008

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Campaigns – Training

Suite 600

While the EITC may be the Federal government's largest anti-poverty tool, many low-income individuals and families are missing out on the opportunities to keep and retain their earnings at tax time. Learn how you can promote the EITC and establish volunteer income tax assistance sites in your community.

Moderator: Anee Brar, CTED

Courtney Noble, *United Way of King County*

Linda Limbeck, *Chelan-Douglas Community Action Council*

Anne Smiley, *Internal Revenue Service*

Homeownership Preservation

Suite 100

What is predatory lending and what steps can be taken to protect potential victims. How can your organization assist distressed borrowers and prevent additional foreclosures? Learn how financial institutions and local organizations are working with borrowers facing foreclosure to help them stay in their homes.

Moderator: Paula Mahoney, WaMu

Fred Corbit, *Northwest Justice Project*

Arturo Gonzalez, *El Centro de la Raza*

Joshua Watler, *ACORN*

Financial Services Needs of Low-Income People

Suite 500

An estimated 10 million American households do not have accounts at banks and other mainstream financial institutions. As a result, these individuals pay excessive fees for basic financial services, are susceptible to high-cost predatory lenders, or have difficulties buying a home, car or otherwise acquiring assets. Learn how you can help increase awareness of these problems, promote practical solutions by partnering with local stakeholders, and bring the benefits of mainstream financial services to the unbanked.

Moderator: Soya Harris, High Cost of Being Poor project

Sarah Gordon, *Center for Financial Innovations, ShoreBank, Chicago, IL*

Tricia McKay, *Medina Foundation*

Brenda Kurz, *Low Income Credit Union*

Brad Williamson, *Washington State Department of Financial Institutions*

Roundtable Discussion – Microenterprise: Learning from Experienced Hands

Suite 300

Experts and amateurs meet for an open ended discussion on Micro Enterprise. This discussion will focus on how organizations and agencies can come together to support, foster and grow microenterprise programs for their communities. Be ready to share your questions and perspectives.

Moderator: Teresa Lemmons, Washington State Microenterprise Association

3:00 p.m.

Networking Break

3:15 p.m.

Asset Building Tools on the Web

Suite 200

Many web tools exist to better help you work with clients and your community. Learn about different web tools that you could incorporate into your asset building strategies.

Moderator: Barbara Gorzinski, Pierce County Associated Ministries

Cobi Jackson, *One Economy/Beehive*

Scott Kinney, *Jump Start*

Jeremy Lushene, *Washington State Department of Financial Institutions*

Continued



Day One – Wednesday, June 4, 2008

3:15 continued

Assets Scorecard – Washington State

Suite 400

How does Washington rank when compared to other states on asset building? Learn about CFED's Assets and Opportunities Scorecard measures and how you can use it to change policy and priorities.

Moderator: Kim Justice, Statewide Poverty Action Network

Andrea Levere, CFED

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) – A skills-based Primer

Suite 600

An IDA is a matched savings account that can be used for the purchase of a first home, further education or start a small business. Learn how your community could offer IDAs.

Moderator: Anee Brar, CTED

Terri Stoflet, Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs

Terra Holcomb, United Way of King County

Promoting Self-Sufficiency and Assets in Public Assistance and Housing programs

Suite 100

Come learn about and discuss how clients receiving public assistance benefits and services can be linked to financial education and asset building by their case managers.

Moderator: Paul Knox, CTED

Diane Christy, Share

Karen Heppler, Neighborhood Networks

Cathy Moray, Seattle Housing Authority

Measuring Outcomes in Asset Building

Suite 500

What are different ways to measure and report outcomes in asset building programs? How do we define success and failure, and what do we do next? How do we best tell our asset building stories and demonstrate results and progress?

Moderator: Dave Sieminski, Low Income Credit Union (LICU)

Jen Romich, University of Washington

Roundtable Discussion – Strengthening Existing Asset Building Coalitions

Suite 300

Experts and amateurs meet for an open-ended discussion on strengthening current asset building coalitions. How can local coalitions be effective in meeting their goals? This session will be a forum for new and existing local coalitions to learn from each other. Bring your questions and perspectives.

Moderator: Peter Badame, Peninsula ABC

4:50 p.m.

Goal Team Huddles

Ballroom C

Come find out about WABC Goal Teams and decide if you want to get involved.

Create a range of private and public financial products and services;

Facilitators: Kerri Rodkey, Bonnie White

Develop and promote public and lending policies for asset building;

Facilitators: Roberta Marsh, Abby Cooper

Market savings, smart borrowing and benefits like the EITC; and

Facilitators: Deborah Squires, Dave Sieminski

Expand financial literacy opportunities and outcomes across the state

Facilitators: Liz Myntti, Barb Gorzinski

Local Asset Building RFP Q & A

5:30 p.m.

Reception

West Lobby



Day Two – Thursday, June 5, 2008

7:30 a.m. **Registration and Continental Breakfast** Ballroom C

8:15 a.m. **Morning Welcome**
Recap of Previous Day, Context for Second Day

8:30 a.m. **Breakout Sessions: Saving for the Future**

Expanding Homeownership in Your Community Suite 200

Discuss how you can promote homeownership in your community. Assess your community's current home ownership resources and determine what is needed to meet current needs of first-time homebuyers.

Moderator: Jan Navarre, CTED Housing Trust Fund
Karen Carlson, *Washington Housing Finance Commission*
Linda Taylor, *Seattle Urban League*
Cori Bautista, *Peoples Bank*

Microenterprise as an Asset Building Tool Suite 400

Learn what makes microenterprise a viable tool for individuals and families as they move toward financial self-sufficiency. Gain an understanding of the role self-employment and micro-business plays in asset development.

Moderator: Teresa Lemmons, Washington State Microenterprise Association
Kerri Rodkey, *Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs*
Cheryl Sesnon, *Washington CASH*

Promoting Savings, Banking and Sound Financial Behaviors Suite 600

Learn how your community can implement effective financial education and savings campaigns, as well as increase mainstream banking. Topics will cover savings campaigns, financial education and initiatives that promote financial access for low and moderate income people.

Moderator: Liz Mynnti, Lower Columbia Community Action
Louisa Quittman, *U.S. Department of the Treasury, Washington D.C.*
George Barany, *America Saves/Consumer Federation of America, Cleveland, OH*
Representative, *Bank on Seattle*

Working with People with Disabilities – Outreach Strategies and Dispelling Eligibility Myths Suite 100

What are federal and state asset limits for people with disabilities? Do people with disabilities lose benefits when they open an IDA account or a business? Case managers and program administrators will learn about building assets for disabilities without jeopardizing their benefits.

Moderator: Abby Cooper, Cooper/Lindman and Associates
Frances Pennell, *Washington Assistive Technology Foundation*

Asset Building around the Country Suite 500

What are practitioners in other states doing to promote asset building? How can those models be applied in Washington State?

Moderator: David Sieminski, National Community Tax Coalition & LICU
Ann Baddour, *Texas Appleseed, Austin, TX*
Sonia Klukas, *U.S. Department of the Treasury, Washington D.C.*
Dory Rand, *Shriver Center on Law and Poverty, Illinois ABC, Chicago, IL*

Continued



Day Two – Thursday, June 5, 2008

8:30 a.m. *continued*

Roundtable Discussion: Northwest Native Asset Building

Suite 300

Experts and Amateurs meet for an open-ended discussion on Northwestern Native asset building. This forum is an opportunity to discuss how tribes and Native groups can foster asset building in their communities. Bring your questions and perspectives.

Moderator: Iris Friday, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

9:45 a.m. **Networking Break**

10:00 a.m. **Breakout Sessions: Protecting our Assets**

Effective Financial Planning and Asset Preservation Practices

Suite 200

How can communities ensure that its citizens have convenient access to financial counseling services? What types of services are most needed and how can they be delivered? Debt reduction, foreclosure prevention, credit repair are among the subjects to be discussed.

Moderator: Liz Myntti, Lower Columbia Community Action Program

Charlie Helms, *Consumer Counseling Northwest*

Judy Poston, *Solid Ground*

Alex Kamaunu, *Financial Education Resource Center*

Funding your Asset Building Initiative

Suite 400

Find out about cost-effective strategies to support your local asset building initiative. Identify key strategic partners by understanding their interests and resources. What are Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) and are they worth it?

Moderator: Kerri Rodkey, Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs (SNAP)

Marie Kurose, *Paul G. Allen Family Foundation*

Paula Mahoney, *WaMu*

Deborah Squires, *United Way of Snohomish County*

Financial Education for Youth

Suite 600

Learn how states and communities promote financial education and how Washington State can be a frontrunner. Topics range from children's savings accounts and financial education in schools through education for seniors.

Moderator: Lyn Peters, Washington State Department of Financial Institutions

Lisa Kanemoto, *Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), San Francisco, CA*

Dory Rand, *Shriver Center on Law and Poverty, Illinois ABC, Chicago, IL*

Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos, *Financial Literacy Private Public Partnership*

The ABCs of Asset Building in Tribal Communities

Suite 100

Explore how asset building programs could be provided to each of the state's 29 federally-recognized tribes. Identify potential partners, programs and curriculum that would meet tribal members' needs.

Moderator: Iris Friday, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Sharon Henderson, *Asset Development Strategies, Albuquerque, NM*

(Day Two continued)



Day Two – Thursday, June 5, 2008

Understanding Cross Cultural Attitudes and Values for Reaching New Immigrants Suite 500

Learn how different cultures view money and how you help them reach their financial goals. Determine the best way to reach new citizens.

Moderator: Manny Lee, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Ann Baddour, *Texas Appleseed, Austin, TX*

Toan Nguyen, *International District Housing Alliance*

Rosemary Sanchez-Allen, *Heritage College*

Roundtable Discussion: Individual Development Accounts – Washington & Oregon Suite 300

Sharing best practices and challenges in program operations

Anee Brar, *CTED*

Cynthia Winter, *Neighborhood Partnership Fund, Portland, OR*

11:15 a.m. **Regional and Tribal Asset Building Coalition Meetings**

Noon **Lunch**

Ballroom C

1:00 p.m. **Getting By, Getting Ahead, Staying Ahead -- Taking Asset Building to Scale**

Legislative Panel – Asset Building: Our Progress So Far

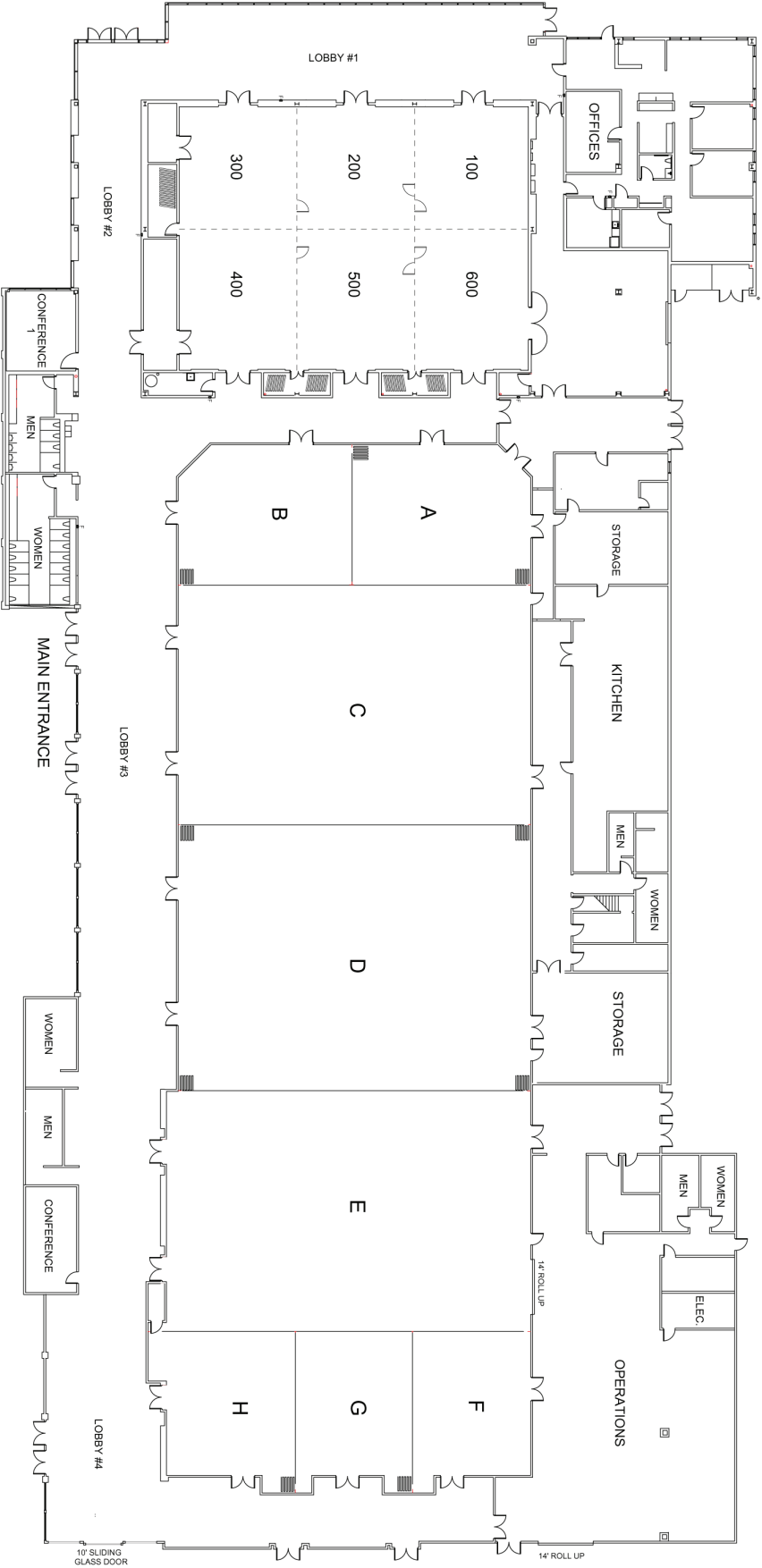
Town Hall Meeting

David Harrison, *University of Washington*

All of Us

Grant Drawing for Local Asset Building Coalition

4:00 p.m. **Adjourn**





Washington Asset Building Coalition

Policy Principles





Policy Principles

GOAL: Financial Health and Security for all

Expand Financial Skills for Success

Financial education is critical in helping people make the most informed decisions regarding current and future use and management of money. Being armed with financial skills and knowledge is especially important to people with lower incomes, who are trapped in an existence that makes them pay extra for everything, from home mortgages and car insurance to furniture and groceries. Financial education gives people the tools they need to reduce their debt and repair credit, the support to obtain assets, and the ability to not fall prey to harmful financial products.

1. Institute financial education in schools

Teaching financial education among school-age children can provide a foundation for financial health and security and help younger people avoid poor financial decisions that can take years to overcome. Financial skills should be integrated into classroom lessons.

2. Increase financial skills, education, and counseling for adults

Financial education is essential for the average family trying to decide how to balance its budget, buy a home, fund the children's education and ensure an income when the parents retire. The state should guarantee adequate funding to provide financial skills training for adults.

3. Integrate financial education into the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and other social service providers

Families that live on low-incomes could benefit the most from tools that help them become financially secure. DSHS and other social service providers can help more families and individuals reach self-sufficiency by incorporating financial planning into current services offered.

Help People Save and Invest

Research shows that ownership of assets –cash savings, stocks, bonds, and home and business equity – is associated with better educational attainment, increased civic participation, and more positive health outcomes. However, for many families, saving money and buying assets is a goal that is perpetually out of reach as they struggle to meet basic needs. The state should invest in opportunities that allow more people to reach financial health and stability through saving and investing.

1. Help people start businesses

Microenterprises are very small businesses with 5 or fewer employees that need \$35,000 or less in start-up capital. Not only are they an important portion of the economy, providing approximately 20% of the employment in Washington, they are also a proven tool that helps low-income families work their way out of poverty. The state should increase its investment in the Washington State Microenterprise Association to expand business and job creation in low-income communities in both rural and urban areas of the state.

2. Help people buy homes

Homeownership is the most common source of household wealth in the United States. However, the prospect of owning a home is elusive for many in our state. According to the Corporation For Enterprise Development (CFED), Washington State ranks 47th in homeownership by income, and received a grade D in homeownership, overall.



(continued)

The state should increase opportunities for homeownership by low and moderate income families through 1) Expanding down-payment assistance programs 2) Increasing funding to expand pre-purchase counseling and foreclosure counseling 3) Promoting options like community land trusts to increase affordability

3. Help children and families save for the future

If we invest in children's savings early on, we significantly increase their chances of being financially secure later in life. A couple ways the state can achieve this goal:

- 1) Create a Universal Children's Savings Account. Saving, like every other good habit, is best learned at the beginning of life. The greatest tool for teaching that essential skill is through Child Accounts, in which every child born receives a savings account with a modest beginning endowment provided by the state government. Matching contributions could also provide an effective incentive among lower-income families who may find it most difficult to save.
- 2) Help families save for college by matching individuals' deposits into our 529 college plan (GET program) to encourage greater participation by low-income savers.

4. Expand Individual Development Account (IDA) program

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) help families save to purchase a home, start a small business or finance a higher education by providing matched savings and financial training. Significant research studies and past experience provide evidence that IDAs have been very successful in helping families move out of poverty and become self-sufficient. In order to meet the need, the state should increase its investment in the IDA program.

5. Promote the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and facilitate the use of tax refunds for savings

The EITC is the nation's largest and most effective federal aid program, eligible to low-income individuals and families participating in the workforce. The money returned from the EITC is critical in helping individuals and families pay for basic necessities, as well as invest in their future. However, this federal tax benefit often goes unclaimed because few people are aware it exists. Our state should continue to invest in EITC outreach and promote the use of split refunds as a tool to create savings and connect tax filers to mainstream financial institutions.

Remove Barriers to Gaining and Keeping Assets

The foundation for financial health and security rests on two pillars: first, a family's ability to build assets that can be used to invest for the future, send children to college, and weather unexpected financial storms; and second, safety nets and safeguards that provide financial security in the event of a job loss, medical emergency, or other life events that could otherwise put a family in a tailspin.

1. Eliminate asset limits in public assistance programs

Personal savings and assets are precisely the kind of resources that allow families to move off- and stay off-public benefit programs. Yet current asset limits penalize families who build savings and assets. Washington State should eliminate asset limits in public benefit programs.



2. Regulate predatory lending

Predatory lending practices often trap people with lower incomes into a cycle of debt, through excessive fees, high interest rates, and even fraud. Washington State should regulate payday and mortgage lending to protect consumers.

3. Promote and support lower cost lending alternatives by banks and credit unions

Many people, particularly those living on low incomes, cannot access mainstream financial products such as bank accounts and low cost loans. This financial exclusion imposes real costs on individuals and their families who must rely on high cost options. The state should ensure that those living on low incomes are able to access affordable loans, by supporting lower cost alternative lending by banks and credit unions.

4. Limit the use of credit scores and credit reports

The use of credit scores to set mortgage and loan interest rates as well as auto insurance rates, unfairly hurts people with lower incomes who tend to have lower credit scores and therefore end up paying more. The state should limit the uses of credit scores and reports to protect consumers from unfair business practices.

5. Ensure health coverage for all

Any family—but especially low-wealth families—can build assets only to see them stripped away. Unexpected health care costs can quickly wipe out a family’s savings. Health insurance provides an important means of asset protection, however it is unavailable and unaffordable to many in our state. This year, Washington State made itself a leader in the nation by passing comprehensive health care coverage for all children. The state should take the next step and extend health care coverage to all adults.

Washington Asset Building Coalition

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
 BECU
 BuRSST for Prosperity
 CARES of Washington
 Chelan-Douglas Community Action
 Columbia Legal Services
 Consumer Education & Training Services (CENTS)
 Economic Opportunity Institute
 Enterprise for Equity
 EPIC
 Federal Reserve Bank of SF
 International District Housing Alliance
 Internal Revenue Service
 KeyBank
 King County Housing Authority
 Longview Housing Authority
 Lower Columbia Community Action Programs
 Lutheran Public Policy Office
 Making Connections
 Metropolitan Development Council
 Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
 Native NW Asset Building Coalition
 North Columbia Community Action Council
 Northwest Cooperative Development Center
 Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
 Okanogan Community Action Council
 Olympic Community Action Programs
 Pierce County Asset Building Coalition
 Pierce County Associated Ministries
 Seattle Housing Authority

Seattle Indian Health Board
 Seattle King Asset Building Collaborative
 ShoreBank Enterprise Cascadia
 Skagit County Community Action
 Snohomish County Community Action Partnership
 South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency
 South Sound Outreach Services
 Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs (SNAP)
 Statewide Poverty Action Network
 Tacoma Housing Authority
 The Alesek Institute
 US Department of Housing and Urban Development
 United Way of Benton/Franklin Counties
 United Way of King County
 United Way of Mason County
 United Way of Snohomish County
 United Way of Spokane County
 United Way of Thurston County
 Washington ACORN
 Washington Appleseed
 Washington Assistive Technology Foundation
 Washington CASH
 Washington State Community Action Partnership
 Washington Credit Union League
 Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development
 Washington Department of Financial Institutions
 Washington Department of Social and Health Services
 Washington Homeownership Center
 WaMu
 Washington State Microenterprise Association

Conference Sponsors and Acknowledgements

Special thanks to our partners and supporters

Building Assets – Strengthening Communities was made possible through the planning, action and support of many people. We particularly want to thank these sponsoring organizations who helped make the conference affordable for all of us to attend.



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STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY,
TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WSMA
Washington State Microenterprise Association



Washington CREDIT UNION LEAGUE AND AFFILIATES

